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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, August 13, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOW'S YOUR DIET FOR VITAMINS A AND C?" Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

I don't know how charts and statistics affect you, but they fascinate me! I'll admit I would hate to have to work them out. But once someone else has done the labor, it certainly is interesting to study the things. Especially when the statistics concern our American homes.

Take some figures on American diets, now being worked up in the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington. Last year those home economists cooperated with other agencies to make a survey of what American homemakers were buying to feed their families. And study of the data collected has shown that a lot of families are not getting the kinds of food they need.

I have a hunch you will want to write down some of the information I have to pass on to you, because it so deeply concerns family health. So suppose you get a bit of scratch paper and a pencil while I tell about the findings in general.

These economists have been measuring American diets, not in terms of foods. Not just how much bread, potatoes, and oranges we are eating. But how much of the essential nutrients we are getting from foods. For instance, they know we ought to have a certain amount of vitamin C each day. They don't care whether we get our vitamin C from oranges or from cabbage or from something else. But they are concerned to find out if we are getting from somewhere not only our quota of vitamin C but also of the other vitamins and minerals, - and proteins, fats, and carbohydrates!

For this broadcast period today I'm going to concentrate on the vitamin findings of the Bureau of Home Economics. And particularly on vitamins A and C.

And now for your pencils! As you probably already know, the vitamin A foods are mostly those having a good green or yellow color. Egg yolks, spinach, collards, carrots, sweet potatoes, yellow peaches, - these are top-notch vitamin A foods. The green and yellow colors are likely to indicate vitamin A.

And vitamin C foods are fruits like oranges, grapefruit, and cantaloupes. And vegetables like peas and spinach, cabbage and tomatoes.

Some foods are double headers. They are excellent sources of both vitamins A and C. Here's a list of these 2-in-1 foods: Peppers (both red and green), spinach, parsley, red tomatoes, peas, collards, turnip greens, watercress. You know, it's rather nice to know about foods that have both vitamin A and C. I'll repeat the list of them: Peppers (both red and green), spinach, parsley, red tomatoes, peas, collards, turnip greens, watercress.

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And here's an interesting bit of information that was new to me and may be to you. That if you eat an extra supply of vitamin A foods, the vitamin A is stored in the body for future reference, so to speak. Like the camel and his hump.

But no such luck with vitamin C. There isn't any place in the body where large reserves of vitamin C are stored. So it's a pretty good idea to get some vitamin C into the diet each day.

Perhaps you would like to know how the different parts of the country compare in their consumption of vitamin A and C foods, and which parts seem to be the best fed, as far as these nutrients are concerned. Well, according to this survey it appears that families in small towns are worse off than farm or large city families. That is, in towns between 500 inhabitants and 5,000.

In towns of this size, among white families, the North Central states presented the sorriest picture of all as far as vitamin A was concerned. The diets of more than half the families studied there showed a deficiency of the vitamin A foods- the leafy green and the yellow vegetables. People in small towns of the West were best, but a fifth of them were also getting too little vitamin A foods.

Then for a glance at the vitamin C picture. Well, both the small towns and the big cities of the Pacific Coast have the edge on those of the rest of the country. Which isn't surprising since that's one of our big citrus fruit and vegetable regions. But even on the Pacific Coast, a fifth of the town families and around a tenth of the city ones are not eating enough vitamin C foods. And families living in small towns and cities in the Southeast are the worst off.

Naturally you and I don't want our families to be among those getting too little vitamins A and C in their diets. So we might all check through our menus to see how often we are serving these vitamin foods.

Nutrition experts in the Bureau of Home Economics say the ideal diet should have in it a daily serving of tomatoes or citrus fruits, and at least one leafy green or yellow vegetable. And of course one reason they want them in the diet is that these foods contain the vitamins A and C we need.

Peppers are one of the vegetables having both these vitamins in generous quantities. And since they are plentiful this summer and hence cheap, you might work them into some of your day's menus, - in salads and such.

Raw stuffed peppers are both delicious and wholesome. And here's an attractive cooked pepper dish for you to write down. Get a shallow oiled baking dish good and hot. Slice some peppers into rings about a half inch thick and parboil them just a couple of minutes. Then fish them out and put them into the hot baking dish. Then drop eggs into the pepper rings. The hot dish and hot peppers together will make the eggs hold their shape. Season them. Then if you like, sprinkle cheese and bread crumbs over the top. Put the dish into the oven and leave just long enough for the eggs to set.

To summarize what we have said in this broadcast: A surprisingly large percentage of the American people seem to be getting less vitamin A and C foods than they need to keep in perfect health. And some of the foods rich in both vitamins A and C are: peppers, spinach, parsley, red tomatoes, peas, collards, turnip greens, watercress.

